

# Kunjen language

**Kunjen**, or **Uw**, is a Paman language spoken on the Cape York Peninsula of Queensland, Australia, by the Uw Oykangand people, Olkola, and related peoples. It is closely related to Kuuk Thaayorre, and perhaps Kuuk Yak.

Two of its dialects, **Uw Olkola** (Olgolo) and **Uw Oykangand** (Koko Wanggara), are very close, being mutually intelligible and sharing 97% of their core vocabulary.<sup>[3]</sup> Another two, **Ogh-Undjan** and **Kawarrangg**, are also close, but somewhat more distant from the first pair. Kokinj (Kokiny) is a subdialect of Ogh-Undjan. A fifth variety, **Athima**, is poorly attested.

Below is a table showing the mutual intelligibility in vocabulary between the Kunjen dialects, based on a list of 100 basic words.<sup>[4]</sup>

<b>Uw Oykangand</b>	97%	44%	38%
<b>Uw Olkola</b>	43%	38%	
<b>Ogh-Undjan</b>	82%		
<b>Kawarrangg</b>			

A small dictionary of Kunjen has been compiled by Philip Hamilton.<sup>[5]</sup> A great majority of words begin with a vowel (>96%), similar to the situation in distantly-related Arrernte. Exceptions include kinship terms and loanwords. Syllable onsets are thought to be present in all languages, so their absence in native lexicon is highly notable.

## Contents

### Respect register

### Phonology

Vowels

Consonants

### In popular culture

### References

## Respect register

As in many other Australian languages, such as Dyirbal, Kunjen also has a respect register, which is a polite way of speaking with a potential mother-in-law and is called *Olkel-Ilmbanhthi*. Most of the vocabulary is replaced, while affixes and function words are kept.<sup>[6]</sup>

The sentence below is in normal Uw Oykangand:

<b>Kunjen</b>	
	Uw
<b>Native to</b>	Australia
<b>Region</b>	Cape York Peninsula, Queensland
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Ngundjan (Ogh-Undjan), Uw Oykangand, Olkola
<b>Native speakers</b>	2 (2005) <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Language family</b>	Pama–Nyungan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Paman</li> <li>▪ Southwestern</li> <li>▪ Upper</li> <li>▪ <b>Kunjen</b></li> </ul>
<b>Dialects</b>	Uw Oykangand Uw Olkola Ogh-Undjan Kawarrangg Athina
<b>Language codes</b>	
<b>ISO 639-3</b>	Either: kjn – Oykangand olk – Olkol
<b>Glottolog</b>	kunj1248 ( <a href="http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/kunj1248">http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/kunj1248</a> ) <sup>[2]</sup>
<b>AIATSIS<sup>[1]</sup></b>	Y83 ( <a href="https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/Y83">https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/Y83</a> ) Kun (cover term), Y188 ( <a href="https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/Y188">https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/Y188</a> ) Kokiny, Y237 ( <a href="https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/Y237">https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/Y237</a> )

**Alka-nhdh idu-rr ay**  
*spear-INSTR spear-PST /*  
*"I speared it with a spear"*

The equivalent in *Olkel-Ilmbanhthi* is:

**Udnga-nhdh yanganyunja-rr ay**  
*spear-INSTR spear-PST /*  
*"I speared it with a spear"*

## Phonology

---

### Vowels

Kunjen has 5 vowels:

	Front	Back
	Unrounded	Rounded
<b>Close</b>	i	u
<b>Mid</b>	e	o
<b>Open</b>	a	

There is a lexical vowel harmony constraint in Kunjen: Close and mid vowels do not co-occur in a word.

### Consonants

Kunjen has 27 consonants:

		Peripheral		Laminal		Apical	
		Bilabial	Velar	Palatal	Dental	Alveolar	Retroflex
<b>Plosive</b>	<u>voiceless</u>	p /p/	k /k/	ch /tʃ/	th /t̪/	t /t/	
	<u>voiced</u>	b /b/	g /g/	j /ʒ/	dh /d̪/	d /d/	
<b>Nasal</b>	<u>Plain</u>	m /m/	ng /ŋ/	ny /ɲ/	nh /ɳ/	n /n/	
	<u>Prestopped</u>	bm /ᵇm/	gng /⁹ŋ/	jny /⁽⁽j⁾/	dnh /⁽⁽ɳ⁾/	dn /ᵈn/	
<b>Trill</b>						rr /r/	
<b>Approximant</b>	<u>Central</u>	w /w/		y /j/			r /r̪/
	<u>Lateral</u>			ly /ʎ/	lh /ɬ/	l /l/	

## In popular culture

---

The Uw Olkola word for the freshwater crocodile, *ogakor*, was used as the name of a tribe on the second season of the American reality television series, Survivor in 2001.<sup>[7]</sup>

## References

---

1. Y83 (<https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/Y83>) Kunjen (cover term) at the Australian Indigenous Languages Database, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (see the info box for additional links)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Southwestern Alaya-Athima" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/kunj1248>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. "Description of the languages Uw Olkola and Uw Oykangand" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20110725095734/http://reocities.com/Athens/delphi/2970/uwolkola.htm>). Archived from the original (<http://reocities.com/Athens/delphi/2970/uwolkola.htm>) on 25 July 2011. Retrieved 29 December 2009.
4. Sommer, Bruce A. (January 1970). "An Australian Language Without CV Syllables". *International Journal of American Linguistics*. 36: 57–58. doi:10.1086/465090 (<https://doi.org/10.1086%2F465090>).
5. "Uw Oykangand and Uw Olkola wordlist" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20160303202428/http://reocities.com/Athens/delphi/2970/olkola.htm>). Archived from the original (<http://reocities.com/Athens/delphi/2970/olkola.htm>) on 3 March 2016. Retrieved 29 December 2009.
6. Evans, Nicholas (2006). "Warramurrungunji Undone: Australian Languages in the 51st Millennium". In Brenzinger, Matthias (ed.). *Language Diversity Endangered*. pp. 354–355.
7. [https://web.archive.org/web/20121017115831/http://www.oocities.org/athens/delphi/2970/f\\_croc.htm](https://web.archive.org/web/20121017115831/http://www.oocities.org/athens/delphi/2970/f_croc.htm)

---

Retrieved from "[https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Kunjen\\_language&oldid=941748585](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Kunjen_language&oldid=941748585)"

---

This page was last edited on 20 February 2020, at 12:32 (UTC).

Text is available under the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License](#); additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#). Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the [Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.](#), a non-profit organization.